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The Decay of Architectural Morale

By Louis LaBeaume * I.S.A.—F.A.I.A.

Morale is an ugly word, though, like many other ugly things, it is very much in evidence at the moment. We speak of national morale or group morale or individual morale as being high or low, as we tend toward courage and confidence or toward cowardice and despair. There are many signs that the morale of the architectural profession is not satisfactory. To speak bluntly, it's pretty bad.

Building for "commodities, firmness, and delight" has ceased, and the architect's present plight is pitiable; but that it is hopeless is still open to question. The loss of employment is hard to bear, but the loss of one's self-respect is not to be borne at all. "Who steals my purse steals trash. . . ; but he that filches from me my good name robs me of that which not enriches him and makes me poor indeed." It is shocking to discern so many symptoms of decaying morale in all the talk that goes on about architecture and the future of the architect. Even the old terms "architecture" and "architect" are being used more and more sparingly, as though they might hint at some taint or stigma.

To refer to architecture as an art is no longer considered good form in certain circles. And any chance reference to beauty makes the average architect hang his head in shame. He feels himself not only unwanted but scorned. He apologizes for his past virtues simply because he hears them vociferously described as vices. And he begins to follow a policy of appeasement—to compromise with his own inner faith. The efficiency boys seem to have got his goat and he longs, oh, how he longs, to be an engineer.

Well, engineering is, like marriage, an honorable estate, and not to be entered into lightly, but solemnly, soberly, and in the presence of God. And, as our marriage laws are based on the principle of monogamy, candidates for matrimony are, not unreasonably, required to make up their minds. Mistakes of choice frequently occur, but the anguish of temperamental incompatibility may be relieved by the courts. So likewise if any of us should decide to divorce himself from the Muse of Architecture and pay allegiance to the Muse of Engineering, the way to do so is open. Only let us have an end to this eternal-triangle stuff. Let us fish or cut bait.

Perhaps before we decide to make so important a decision, however, we might do well to consider some of the circumstances which have brought about our confused and debilitated state of mind. Until a few years ago, the architect believed in himself and in the dignity of his calling. He was respected in the community as a man apart from the jerry-builder or the structural engineer. By reason of his special qualities and, to some extent, as a result of his training, he had been able to cultivate the public appreciation of architecture as an art, differentiating it from mere building.

He had succeeded in organizing his professional concepts in such a way as to win the respect of the more intelligent elements of the community. By them he was considered not a futile visionary, a dilettante, or a long-haired aesthete, but a man of taste and sound, practical judgment. His sense of order, his skill in plan and design, were supplemented by sound knowledge of fundamental structure and by sufficient administrative ability to correlate and combine the various factors and crafts involved in each special work entrusted to him.

Under these conditions, many men rose to eminence in the architectural profession, some in limited, some in larger fields. Always the architect's personality was revealed in his accomplishments, and the work of the more talented men was easily identifiable by this personal touch even in the period when eclecticism, in the use of so-called historic styles, was rampant. If this eclecticism resulted in a certain anarchy, it at least stimulated the public imagination toward an increased respect for the goals which a truly national architecture might some day attain. Gusto, virility, and vigor abounded in much of the work of the generation just past. This exuberant practice of architecture went on all over America until the great debacle of 1929. With no indigenous architectural traditions of our own in a terrain embracing all the topographical variety of a continent, in a climate ranging from the extremes of Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand, and with a population of mixed European ancestry, a considerable period of experimentation is understandable. Even so, we were developing an American idiom, especially in our commercial structures and our domestic architecture. In these fields we had achieved standards of efficiency and convenience unmatched in Europe or elsewhere. We hadn't, it is true, learned to conceive the home as a mere machine for living. We regarded it rather as a pleasant haven, the focal point of normal, decent, intelligent family life and of civilized hospitality. Its roots were in the earth, and it bore no resemblance to a ship, a tank, or a body by Fisher.

During World War I, there had been a perceptible lessening of activity. The architect was momentarily thrust aside and his place usurped by the constructor. Army cantonments, barracks, depots, and supply bases were thrown together in a great hurry, and, as emergency and temporary structures, they were perhaps justifiably considered not worthy of the architect's capabilities. Architects had a mild case of jitters, fearing continued encouragement of the builder and constructor after the War, although even in normal times the great bulk of building in this or in any other country has been accomplished without benefit of architects or architecture. This nervousness was not immediately justifiable, for throughout the building orgy following the War, American architects were

employed on a scale unprecedented in any other time or place. But flies appeared in the ointment.

In the speculative frenzy of the Twenties the promoter, the realtor, and the go-getter seemed to rule the roost. Witnessing their pre-eminence, the architect frightened himself into believing that his security depended on the mastery of their arts rather than on the cultivation of his own. Some devil kept whispering that the architect could survive only by himself becoming a realtor, a promoter, or a captain of finance. He was urged to think less and less about architecture as architecture and more and more about architecture as business.

The War had interrupted the orderly progress of architecture in Europe, and the rebuilding of the devastated areas of France contributed nothing of any inspirational value. In the Germanic countries, however, forces were being released which would tend to change the entire course of architectural progress. In Germany, in Holland, Belgium, Norway, and Sweden, a new cult of efficiency per se was being promulgated. This new cult was destined, ultimately, to spread across the seas and to influence, for better or worse, our preconceived theories of design and our hitherto cherished conceptions of the dignity of architecture. Functionalism was hailed as a new discovery, although few architectural principles or motives can be said to have been more functional than the column, the lintel, the arch, the dome, or the buttress. While we readily admit that some of these motives were becoming less and less applicable to modern necessities, the new school's utter contempt for tradition was, to say the least, disconcerting.

We began to hear of Behrens and Mendelsohn, the Bauhaus group, and a very vocal French engineer who called himself Le Corbusier. We began to see visions and hear voices—high, shrill voices. Frank Lloyd Wright came out of his silence, and soon the pack was in full cry. Proponents of a new order, in addition to their contempt for all precedent and history, exhibited a tendency to brush aside every consideration of climate, geography, and diplomatic comity in their enthusiasm for what they proudly called the "international style."

Ironically enough, those who had been loudest in their demands that we cease to look toward Europe for inspiration but, instead, express ourselves in a purely native idiom appropriate to our habits and environment, now urged us to follow the lead of the internationalists. Photographs of some of their achievements began to appear in the architectural press. They were studied with interest and awe. They undoubtedly emphasized the merit of simplicity, and we felt, with relief, that nothing more could be taken off. The reaction of neither the public nor the profession was immediately enthusiastic. As the pictures were not instantly irresistible, they were soon followed by a mass of argumentative and expository literature. Unfortunately these writings were couched in such occult terms and repeated simple and time-worn truths in such fantastic jargon that popular bewilderment increased. If old clichés were discarded, their place was filled with gibberish.

As often happens when the masses are confused, opportunists arose to capitalize the public diffidence and lack of understanding. Here at least was a new fashion fresh from Vienna, Dessau, or Stuttgart, ready

to be exploited. Customers could undoubtedly be found if they could be flattered or cajoled into believing themselves members of the vanguard. The poor boobs who had hitherto been content to ask "What style is it?" would perhaps now ask "What the hell is it?" Nevertheless, they could be shamed by a superior pose into ultimately accepting it. Had not the same thing happened in the field of pictorial art? Those who came to laugh (at Cubism, Dadaism, Futurism, and Abstractism) remained to pay.

It was an uphill job in the early Thirties because Americans weren't building much. We knew the old stuff to be obsolescent, but we thought we were broke. And we couldn't borrow money from Europe, though the international style had been developed in Europe with money borrowed from us. Our first experiments with the new style were tentative and sporadic—a shop front here, a speakeasy there, a cocktail lounge, a dentist's office, a gasoline station. Then our big chance came with the celebration of A Century of Progress at Chicago. The *cognoscenti* say (by the *cognoscenti* we mean, of course, the Modern masters) that we muffed it. Our American boys hadn't quite got the feel of the thing. Nor did we do much better in attempting to visualize the World of Tomorrow at Flushing. True, we enclosed a lot of space at both places, having been told that architecture is only an envelope, a carton, or shell, and that space is the meat in the cocoanut. So the shell game goes on—we sneak up on space and try to snare some of it in a plastic bandbox or glass container.

Seriously we are told that it's the shape of the space that counts, not the appearance of the envelope or container. We are dogmatically assured that architects throughout the ages have been barking up the wrong tree or the wrong column. The new order attaches great importance to the use of the fifth column long known to us as the humble Lally and formerly relegated to menial and often underground service. As a matter of fact, the Lally is probably the oldest of all the orders, and no one can deny its insinuating grace and practical performance.

Engineers have always loved the Lally. They've always loved straight lines, too, as the shortest distance between two points and the easiest to draw, with the proper mechanical instruments. They never could manage mouldings or ornament of any kind. Carving pained them, detail bored them, composition or proportion flabbergasted them. Few of them had ever cared how a thing looked as long as it stood up. Flat roofs and factory sash were a cinch, and the cantilever—oh, the cantilever!—was right down their alley. Of course, they joined the movement, for here was the kind of stuff they could do with one hand tied behind their backs. They cheered, they jeered. They said that architects had been thinking too much of appearance and not enough of realities, that we'd been thinking of balance and order and something called composition or something else called proportion. Worse still (and this is the most damning indictment of all) that we'd been thinking of beauty or majesty or dignity, when we should have been thinking only of function. This is a shattering charge. No wonder we are unnerved.

From youth to old age we have been beguiled by Beauty, and now to be told that we are only a lot of Tommy Manvilles is upsetting. Moreover, it is discon-

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Editor Monthly Bulletin

ARTHUR WOLTERS DORF, 520 NORTH MICHIGAN AVE., CHICAGO

Early in the 1920's Chicago architects had the laudable ambition to provide for all architectural bodies in the city a fine clubhouse of good architecture where regular architects' meetings, as well as committee meetings, could be held. The junior architectural body, the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club was to be provided with an atelier in the building. Chicago Chapter A.I.A. was a leader in this move. Alfred Granger, architect and socialite, succeeded in interesting John J. Glessner, dweller in the Glessner House, southwest corner 18th and Indiana Avenue, in the scheme. Mr. Glessner promised to deed at his death his home, designed by H. H. Richardson, to the Chapter. He made one condition that must be acted upon at once. Across the street from Glessner stood the S. S. Kimball mansion, 1801 Prairie Avenue, which had been rented since the death of Mr. and Mrs. Kimball. Mr. Glessner demanded that the architects guarantee him against undesirable tenants in the Kimball house.

The only way that could be done was for the architects to buy the Kimball place. Here enters Charles E. Fox (Marshall & Fox, architects). Fox was considered especially talented as an organizer. The Architects' Realty Trust was created issuing one-hundred \$1,000 certificates which were sold to architects and other building interests at \$900 each, creating a \$90,000 fund. The Kimball place was purchased by the Realty Trust for \$82,000 cash leaving \$8,000 for necessary remodeling and repairs. To implement the house as a meeting place the Architects Club of Chicago was created. The club sought memberships from architects, preferred contractors, material men, mortgage bankers, and public utility magnates like the Insulls. The club paid rent to the Realty Trust and assumed all taxes. All this occurred in 1924. From then on Chapter, Society, Architectural Club, Producers' Council, and the like, met here regularly. In time complaints were heard that the location was too far from the loop, that the neighborhood was changing to an industrial section. So attendance grew poorer as time passed.

On January 20, 1936 John J. Glessner died at the

age of 93. Glessner House deeded in the will to the Chicago Chapter was now ready to have its ownership transferred. The deed restricted the Chapter to shift no partitions in the main body of the house. The name Glessner house must be preserved and the house could not be sold. A Chapter committee was appointed to study the cost of maintenance and conversion of the stable into a banquet room. The committee found that the upkeep of this house would cost three times what the upkeep of the Kimball house cost. Hard times had struck the architects by 1936. The architects felt unable to handle the property and the gift was declined in the spring of 1937. Membership in the Architects Club of Chicago was dwindling; the club could not meet its obligations to the Realty Trust; and in the summer of 1939, after the various architectural bodies had abandoned the Kimball house as a meeting place, the club vacated the premises. The Realty Trust trustees found a tenant in Mrs. Hull who has occupied the house and garage ever since with a private school for subnormal children.

Prairie Avenue, once the exclusive neighborhood for Chicago's wealthiest cultural element, had changed from residential to industrial property. The Kimball house, with its high wrought iron fence, is ideally located for its present use. Mrs. Hull and associates bought, in the first week of May, 1943, the entire property for \$8,000 cash assuming all back taxes. The Architects' Realty Trust has still to dispose of a fine architectural library and a handsome portrait-painting of Sir Christopher Wren. They will then have for distribution, after legal and other expenses have been paid, a small sum which they will distribute equitably to certificate holders as their interest may appear. Then they will write *finis* to the whole story.

In view of the lively discussion centering on the accepted design of the Jefferson Monument for Washington when this design was submitted in competition, the lack of discussion at the dedication of the Monument on April 13, 1943, the 200th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birth, is surprising. It will be remembered that proponents for ultra modern architecture actively opposed the acceptance of the Pope design, feeling it was too traditional.

Much the same thing happened when Henry Bacon's design for the Lincoln Memorial was chosen more than a decade before. It will be conceded that the Lincoln Memorial, closing the Mall at the Potomac end, possesses great dignity, grandeur, scholarship and beauty even though the Great Emancipator may never have had sufficient time or repose or scholarship in the arts to appreciate its fine qualities, could he have seen it.

The case of Thomas Jefferson is different, however. He, a genius deeply interested in architecture, was responsible for the conception and design of the University of Virginia. He was a student of Palladio's publications and it is said traced from these features that were directly applied to the University campus buildings. His inspiration for the University's library building was the Pantheon in Rome. And the new Jefferson Monument echoes at a smaller scale the Pantheon dome. It should also be remembered that Thomas Jefferson was one of the judges to select the design for the Federal City Capitol and that he was

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Illinois Society April-May Meetings

Did Chicago's honored guest, charming Madame Chiang-Kai-shek, with captivating voice and perfect English diction, inspire Leo Weissenborn, I.S.A. monthly program builder, to hold the April Illinois Society of Architects meeting in Chinatown in the interest of a global architectural horizon? Or was it the war? The board of directors approved his plan. So, on the twenty-seventh, seventy members and their ladies assembled in the Guey Sam restaurant, 2205 S. Wentworth Avenue, for dinner preliminary to the lesson in architecture of old Cathay.

The menu was of Chinese dishes. The service was Chinese and indifferent. The dinner finished, the company repaired to the On Leong Association building across the street, Patricia Moy, Chinese maiden and niece of "Mayor" Moy, functioning as guide for the rest of the evening. The entrance led up a terrazzo stairway where a fierce tiger in the platform mural was met on the way to the second story; up to the third story and across more terrazzo floors through the Shrine Room to the Courtroom where the architects' meeting assembled.

It was 8:15 P.M. when President Ryan called the meeting to order. Secretary Fuhrer read the minutes of the March meeting. Benjamin F. Olson discussed the Illinois Engineers' License Act to go into effect August 1. President Ryan reviewed the correspondence on this subject and discussions in the board of directors. The editorial in the April-May Bulletin excited correspondence from engineers and a promise that the Society would have an answer for the engineers probably in the June 1 issue of the Bulletin. Representation at the forthcoming annual meeting of the A.I.A. in Cincinnati was discussed. The I.S.A. has two delegates at that meeting. President Ryan was unanimously voted a delegate and Treasurer Llewellyn was elected the second delegate with Eugene Fuhrer as an alternate. Leo Weissenborn next introduced Patricia Moy to the company and the trip through Chinatown began.

Miss Moy led the party back to the Shrine Room, explaining the paintings and carvings and their symbolism. Questions were put to her regarding Chinese art, architecture, and language. To one she replied that the Chinese colony was made up of Cantonese, that many different dialects of the Chinese language existed, and that when Madame Chiang-Kai-shek visited them recently, speaking to them in the Mandarin language and they replying in Cantonese, they and she did not understand one another, so they turned to English. Other rooms and halls in this building were visited hurriedly and then the company passed down the street to the Ling Long Historical Museum. This museum is really a show and salesroom of Chinese objects d'art. From Ling Long Museum, the party travelled a block and a half to the Chinese Emporium at 149-155 West Cermak Road. Here they browsed through the two stories of Chinese objects in jade, ivory, soapstone, wood, textiles, etc., buying if they felt so disposed until nearly 10:00 o'clock when the architects and their ladies scattered out of Chinatown.

The buildings visited and others in their immediate neighborhood are not of Chinese construction. They conform to American building practices as laid down by building ordinances applicable in the time when they were built. The two buildings, On Leong Building and Ling Long, both by architects Michaelson and Rogstad have a brick exterior with terra cotta trimmings carrying ornament of Chinese character. Their floor construction is of reinforced concrete. The facade of Ling Long Museum, above the store front is columnar in the Renaissance manner though flat relief ornament on columns and pilasters is of Chinese pattern. The On Leong Building is crowned by projecting eaves with ends turned up supporting a mansard roof, flanked by strong corner towers each having cornices with curved up ends in pagoda fashion. Other buildings in this character are found in the immediate neighborhood. They were built in the period 1927-1932.

Your scribe, knowing that his treatment of Chinese architecture is neither full, factual, nor fastidious, now turns to authorities on this subject and quotes as follows. The late Ralph Adams Cram in 1901 wrote: "In general, however, it is safe to conclude that the Chinese architecture of the last 300 years is immeasurably inferior to that which must have gone before. . . .

"It is easy to see why this decadence should have taken place in China and not in Japan, for the latter country has never been

conquered since history began. Its dynasty has endured for thousands of years, and it possessed during its twelve centuries of greatness a dominant and united religion, and a complete system of social organization. In China the case has been wholly different. Now united under one ruler, now divided into fighting states, it has seen a score of dynasties, and twice—once in the thirteenth century by Kublai Khan, the Mongol chief, and once in the sixteenth century by the Manchus, under Li—it has been entirely conquered, and it still remains under the dominion of the Manchu invaders.

"Mongol and Manchu influences are everywhere visible in what passes for modern architecture, and this fatal barbarism makes Chinese architecture unworthy the study that the art of building in Japan can justly claim.

"In the China-Japanese architecture of Japan we find a style that has existed and developed logically for twelve hundred years and is entitled to rank with the great styles of the world; in such architecture as remains in China we find only a decadent and erratic episode."

Sir Banister Fletcher, writing in 1928, said: "It must be remembered that Chinese art has always found its chief outlet in paintings which gave full opportunity for the display of the Chinese instinct for fineness of line. The art was poetic rather than material; for the Chinese revelled in the beauty of nature and had little feeling for architectural design, which they held subservient merely to human needs. Chinese architecture, though subject to Buddhist and Mahometan influence on the religious side, held its own as an indigenous style, and so the forms of today reproduce, with little change or progress, those of the early centuries of our era; moreover, there is no distinction between sacred and secular architecture, and temples, tombs, public buildings, and private houses, whether great or small, all follow the same plan. . . .

"The Chinese had little religious zeal, and therefore few great temples; no territorial aristocracy, and therefore no noble country houses; little pride of family, and therefore no town mansions; while their domestic architecture was trammelled by sumptuary laws to mark the social status of the owner."

The Society's May dinner-meeting fell on the 25th and occurred in the quarters of the Chicago Bar Association, 35 members attending. President Ryan presided; Secretary Fuhrer read the minutes of the April meeting; no correspondence of importance from committees had been received and discussion proceeded on the subject of the Illinois Professional Engineering Act which becomes law on August 1.

B. F. Olson referred to correspondence on this subject. President Ryan explained the halt in securing a legal opinion on the constitutionality of the act informing his hearers that this legal opinion was sought jointly and at the expense of the Illinois Society, the Chicago and Central Illinois A.I.A. Richard E. Schmidt expressed the belief that the only legal opinion of value to be a court opinion after a trial case. To the support of such a trial Mr. Schmidt advocated the three architectural bodies should contribute their quota. Program chairman Weissenborn announced the special speakers for the June meeting to be Louis La Beaume of St. Louis, Mo., and Edward R. Rannels, Department of Art, University of Kentucky. The meeting falls on June 22 and members' ladies are invited. The President announced three names as the Nominating committee for the coming year officers and members from the floor nominated three others for the members' ticket nominations.

The President now introduced Mr. Milton M. Bowen of the War Production Board, Chicago office, as the special speaker of the evening. He said the billions devoted to war construction had increased in the last three years not in arithmetical but in geometrical progression. Much of this work would, no doubt, disappear after peace comes. But for the present every effort must be bent to give first place and always to winning the war. In April, 1942 came Order L-41 and this prevails today though the changes from week to week are many and constant. The speaker was provided with endless booklets that had been published by the Government for the guidance and control of all building material and labor. Lack of space prevents going into detail. Questions and answers followed until 10:30 when the meeting ended and President Ryan and Secretary Fuhrer made for the train to take them to Cincinnati where on the morning of the 26th they would function as association delegates to the A.I.A. national meet.

Chicago Chapter April-May Meetings

The April meeting of the Chicago Chapter, American Institute of Architects, fell on the 13th and was held in the Tavern Club with an attendance of 33.

The usual proceedings were reversed in that the business meeting began at 6:30. It was followed by the dinner and the dinner was followed by the program. President Owings had Assistant Secretary Ward read the minutes of the March meeting. Mr. Owings announced consummation of arrangements for the transfer of the Chapter portrait collection to the Chicago Historical Society. Peter Brust's term as regional A.I.A. Director of the Illinois-Wisconsin district is near its end. The Chicago Chapter, as one of the three chapters in the district, voiced its preference for Jerrold Loeb as a candidate for this directorship. Ballots were distributed bearing ten names of members willing to go as Chapter delegates to the 75th A.I.A. annual meeting to be held in Cincinnati on May 26, 27, and 28. The Chapter is entitled to eleven delegates and members were asked to add other names to the ballots. No announcement of this voting came during the evening.

The President made some fitting remarks apropos Thomas Jefferson who was born on April 13 and whose national monument was dedicated in Washington on his 200th anniversary. This ended the business meeting and the dinner followed.

The dinner over, President Owings, having to catch a train for Cleveland, called Vice President Gerhardt to the chair. He called upon Pierre Blouke to introduce the speaker of the evening and Mr. Blouke read a formal introduction of Harry Telford Frost. Blouke's paper dwelt upon the architectural and city planning contacts of Mr. Frost as well as his professional achievements.

It will be remembered that Mr. Frost returned from a two year journey in the Pacific a year ago; that in two papers published in the I.S.A. Bulletin ("Notes on a New Capital City in the Orient," October-November, 1940 and "The Architectural Pearls of Our Philippines," April-May, 1942) he explained the planning of Quezon City and Tagaytay, the architectural stamp of Old Manila, its transformation through the Burnham plan of 1900, the city of Baguio, and much else that he treated in his address which was read. He said much regarding comparative areas of Old Manila and the adjoining Quezon City; the exposition grounds in Quezon City which had its first annual tryout before the speaker left the island; the government, embassy, judiciary buildings and the University, all were dwelt upon. The speaker spoke of the ephemeral character of the tao's house and the characteristic school buildings.

After the reading of this paper came stereopticon slides showing Manila, newly created boulevards in Quezon City, public and private buildings, the handsome ballroom in the Hotel Manila, terraced rice paddies in the mountains, and other rural scenes. The pictures took one through Luzon and to Mindanao in the Sulu Archipelago. There were questions and answers. The meeting adjourned at 9:40.

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To the May dinner-meeting of the Chicago Chapter A.I.A. in the Normandy House on the 11th came 26. When the meeting was called to order, among those absent were President Owings, Secretary Lindsay Suter, Assistant Secretary Ward, Treasurer Sam Marx. So Paul Gerhardt, Jr., first Vice President, presided and L. Morgan Yost functioned as Secretary.

Mr. Yost read the minutes of the April meeting. Mr. Gerhardt announced the names of delegates to the A.I.A. annual meeting to occur in Cincinnati May 26, 27, and 28. This Chapter is given ten delegates. If they follow the example of last year's Chicago delegates they may be compared to airplanes that swoop down onto a landing field and are off again before accomplishing anything on land. Nominating committee chairman Erikson submitted candidates' names for Chapter officers for the following year. Gerhardt raised the question of the Chapter's participation with the Illinois Society, Central Illinois Chapter, and Society of Southern Illinois Architects in securing legal opinion on the constitutionality of the Professional Engineers' License Act which goes into effect August 1. Just what action the Chapter took, if any, your reporter is unable to say.

The chairman now introduced the special guest speaker of the evening, Hugh R. Pomeroy, Director of the National Association of Housing Officials since November, 1942, and prior to that connection,

Director of the Virginia State Planning Board in Richmond. He was associated with the American Society of Planning Officials and also with planning associations in California. He is an interesting and forceful speaker. His subject was "Development of Comprehensive Housing Programs and Relation of War Housing and its Aftermath to such Programs." Of course, no one will claim that the subjects of housing, war housing, and post war planning are new ones for architects. Those subjects are monopolizing meetings as well as the architectural press. There isn't much else to discuss except lack of jobs. Anyway Mr. Pomeroy held his audience. Regarding large scale housing for the underprivileged sponsored and directed by the Federal Government, he felt much advance was shown in daylighting and sanitation, better room planning; that most of this work was pretty sorry to look at though in a few instances creditable effects had been achieved. The site planning for such housing was generally bad and he criticized architects for not doing better with site planning. The speaker had no tolerance for row houses in any scheme and deplored the existence of the row houses built about 50 and more years ago in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

City planning commissions and zoning are essentials and communities are slowly establishing such bodies. Most, however, are lacking in knowledge and experience. He classed the Chicago Plan Commission high among such bodies. He spoke of the millions of families whose annual incomes were \$1,500 and under and believed public aid would have to continue for this group. Twelve to fifteen million housing units will be needed in the next decade which the speaker figures will come to one and one and a half million housing units per year in the post war days. Earl Reed raised the question, based on his experience in studying a Chicago section threatened with blight, where is the money to come from to rehabilitate! The Greer-Hansen plan, said another speaker, must be the lifesaver.

Urbanism Versus Suburbanism

The evening of March 22, Jose Luis Sert, Spanish architect, spoke before the School of Design in Chicago on the subject given in the caption. Early arrivals had the opportunity of viewing recent developments of the school showing industrial design and photographs of modern schools sent from the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Proceedings opened with Moholy Nagy reading a paper difficult to understand because of his pronunciation. George Fred Keck followed. Mr. Sert, the next speaker, handles English in a masterly way. He used slides to illustrate his remarks. An enlightened public is a prerequisite for housing developments in the post war era, he thought. The time had not arrived to examine trends. A slide showing a possible restoration of demolished London evidenced lack of consideration of transportation and recreational requirements.

Mr. Sert believes our suburbs are neither city nor country since they are unsatisfying to those fleeing from city life. He is a disciple of Le Corbusier in that he favors clearing deteriorated areas, replanting them with occasional tall buildings whose lower stories should be given over to people with children and invalids because these lower zones are nearer the recreation grounds. He recommends banishing the word *rehabilitation* from our vocabulary where it is now used in discussions of modern planning.

—L. J. W.

Do you know how to build a glass partition that is transparent when you want it and translucent when you want it? Dr. Alexander Silverman, Dean, Chemistry Department, University of Pittsburgh, told the American Ceramic Society of Pittsburgh how to do it. Build a light-polarizing glass sandwich partition—two layers—and an opaque partition will result. Slide back one layer and the partition becomes transparent. Electricity passing through could heat the room.

"A room of sixty degrees, insuring warm feet and uniform radiation toward the body from all sides, would be more comfortable," declared Dr. Silverman, "than today's home at seventy degrees or higher."

Roman Architecture Out after Carolingian

The Carolingian period marked the decline and death of the art of mosaic, that decoration on which the Early Christian and Byzantine buildings had depended so largely for their effect. Charlemagne, it is true, decorated the dome of Aachen with a great mosaic picture, and about the same time others were made for the church of Germigny-les-Pres. But the art was already in its decline, and after the IX century mosaics ceased to be executed.

Such, then, are some of the more prominent characteristics of Carolingian architecture—that strange, disordered, contradictory art, whose bleak winter of five centuries binds together the autumn of ancient art, and the sunny springtime of Gothic. Orderly and consistent progress during this period did not exist; but when architecture emerged from the Carolingian period in the XI century, it was in a form and character totally different from that in which it had entered it in the VI century. How radical this transformation had been will be evident on comparing the nave of Montier-en-Der—the type of the most highly developed Carolingian church—with any of the Early Christian or Byzantine basilicas. The change effected had been partly constructive, partly destructive. That the constructive work, although sporadic and contradictory, was nevertheless vital and availing, has already been shown; but the great mission of Carolingian architecture was not creation but destruction.

Five centuries of barbarism are the only conceivable force that could have had the power to free Western architecture from the trammels of Roman formula—that colossus that had bestridden the civilized world from the Persian Gulf to the North Sea, and had fastened its iron heel upon all the West. How impossible it is for a civilized people to free itself from the Roman architectural influence, is proved by the persistence with which even the dead bones of Roman ornament, dug up in the time of Renaissance, have ever since been the skeleton at the feast of Western art. It was only by means of the forgetfulness of the Dark Ages that the art of the succeeding centuries was free to cut itself loose from the classical canons, and develop into new and untrammelled forms. This was the first great work of the Carolingian era.

—From "Medieval Architecture" by A. Kingsley Porter

New "Breathing" Type Brick Wall

In the new Douglas Aircraft plant in Oklahoma there is a windowless "controlled-conditions" building having a fifty feet high brick enclosure that breathes. The now better known steel and glass wool wall, though cheaper than the brick, was ruled out by restrictions on the use of steel. Albert S. Low, Vice President and Chief Engineer of The Austin Company, architect-engineer-managers of the project, designed the wall.

The wall, from outside in, is made up of a course of common brick; a course of tile with perforated back laid with openings vertical; a 4-inch blanket of rock wool; a vapor seal paper; and two courses of brick. The wall is laid with two stretcher courses about waist high that have the vertical joints open for air intakes. These admit air to a flue formed by the tile, the perforated backs of which are in contact with the insulating blanket, which is kept dry by suction up the flue. At about roof level, a rowlock course of brick, with vertical joints open, forms an air exhaust. Built thus, the insulating value of the wall is said to be equivalent to eighty inches of brick.

Trussed wall ties at each fourth course of brick tie the outside brick to the inside, and furnish supports for the vertical tile and the insulating bats. The wall was laid in a continuous vertical lift from a scaffold, supported from the building steel and raised by small winches.

A new cement for building fortifications is reported from Germany. It is made from the by-product of French beet factories. Scum formed when beets are boiled is carbonate of lime and water. Formerly thrown away the Germans now produce 4,000 tons of calcium carbonate from the scum in processing 70,000 tons of beets. It is partially dried, thoroughly mixed with finely divided clay by mechanical beaters; burned in a rotary kiln, the clinker is removed and pulverized into cement. The product shows satisfactory durability under war conditions.

Architects and Public

If our blighted areas had been struck by bombs they would be no worse than they are as places for human habitation. In devising new city plans we lack the clear-cut advantage of the blasted hold and gaps. The millions of wandering workers, industrial or agricultural, returning "home" will make just as difficult a problem of the relation between town and country as does the British need for growing more food. Are we any less desperate in our need of code setting up clear national standards of living, building, financing? Is our building industry well enough integrated?

There is instruction, perhaps, for architects everywhere in the British architects' approach. Nowhere in *Rebuilding Britain* is there any special plea for retention of an architect. The British architects have not argued for themselves, they have simply made themselves indispensable. Architecture and architects can never flourish on short aims, cheap hopes, extemporized devices, and scattered ideas. But by working shoulder to shoulder with all those who are creating a large framework of planning and order and broad constructive policy, the British architects have made their own permanent place. When ministries, municipalities, industries, boards, institutions start forth, at last, upon the large programs that have been organized, it will be only natural for them to turn to the men who have shown them, right along, how to put quality, amenity, standards into the work—and how to give their country a noble and lovable face.

—Douglas Haskell in "Architectural Record"

Dust a Factor in Boston Fire

A Cincinnati authority on dust explosions reporting on the recent Coconut Grove fire to co-ordinating state agencies says: "All foliage decorations gather amazing quantities of dust in a few months. If you will visit the fly gallery of a theatre you will see what I mean. The bus boy dropped a match, as he told you. He started a tiny blaze on a palm leaf. Trying to put it out with his hands, he shook the leaves of the palm tree, laden with dust of months."

"Instantly a cloud of dust spread for 10 or 12 feet. The tiny blaze ignited this and it exploded into flame like so much gasoline. The shock of this flash shook all the palm leaves in the room . . . the whole place for a fraction of a second was filled with fine dust and then it all blew up."

"Flame from this was enough to set fire to the palm trees, fire-proofed as they probably were. Theatrical fire-proofing is only to make the material char for a while before it goes into flame, and gets out of control. The carbon monoxide generated by the original explosion killed people like flies. The more the palm leaves smoldered before bursting into flame, the more gas was generated."

—Engineering News Record

University of Illinois Combustion Research

Researches carried on in the University of Illinois under Professor Julian R. Fellows for a furnace burning soft coal that gives off no smoke have been successful.

Ceramic tiles replace the strategic alloy metal ordinarily used for grates and fire box linings. Stoking is simplified by dumping coal in by the bucketful through the firing door which is placed at an angle leading down to the fire pit.

Smoke must pass through glowing coals, where it is burned, resulting in a saving of heat; only the smokeless burned gases escape up the chimney. A special vent supplies pre-heated air that improves combustion efficiency. The improved furnace is housed in a smooth streamlined casing, easy to keep clean. Other features include an automatic temperature control and automatic draft compensator.

The longest concrete bridge span in the world has just been completed in Sweden; it is 886 feet long.

A new scientific and industrial era will appear after the close of this world war, an era presaged by electronics, now the secret weapon of war.

Federal Aid in Urban Post-war Redevelopment

A bill has been introduced in Congress by Senator Thomas of Utah to establish an Urban Redevelopment Agency with a quarter-billion dollar fund. The money would be lent to municipalities for the purpose of buying blighted areas. The bill was referred to Senator George's committee on post war planning.

Two theories motivate the bill: (1) inflated land values in the center of large cities making it impossible to build new structures on the land; (2) the only way to overcome this situation is for the Federal Government to take the loss involved in writing down the value of the land. While partial use of the land for parks is not ruled out, the lion's share would be rented for commercial, industrial, or residential use. Security for the Federal Government's loan to the municipality would be rentals derived from the land. The Government probably would take a substantial loss in the transaction. Reportedly, the Congress will take no action on the bill.

Secretary of Commerce Jesse Jones has another worry. It is the problem of peace-time use of the gigantic war production machine built by the Government. Theoretically, the Government and private business are to work together to utilize in peace much of the machinery created for war. The Secretary noted that the Defense Plant Corporation has built, equipped, and owns 1,479 plants at a cost of \$7,000,000,000. This is over and above the plants built by the War and Navy Departments and the Maritime Commission. You have some problem Mr. Jones and the architects wonder how much work will be allocated to them to redesign the war plants to make them adaptable to private industry.

I and C Background for Planning Chicago

"Industrial and Commercial Background for Planning Chicago" is a publication released April 15 by the Chicago Plan Commission.

The strength of Chicago's position of leadership in war production has been amplified materially by the establishment of a chain of very large new manufacturing plants near the periphery of the city. The significance of these developments is so profound and the broad implications so fundamental that it was deemed prudent for the Plan Commission staff to pursue an intensive study of them and to make report of its findings.

The effects of heavy industrial expansion and the impact of other phases of the war effort on Chicago's trade and commerce provided a companion study for the staff.

The result of these staff efforts is the publication of this volume. Its story is divided into three parts: Part I, Historical Review of Chicago's Industrial Growth; Part II, Industrial trends in Chicago and its region; Part III, Commercial trends in Chicago and its region.

The entire study was co-ordinated by staff members of the Division of Research under the direction of Dr. Homer Hoyt and was augmented by the counsel and collaboration of many officials in civic agencies and in private industry. Copies are available for purchase at the Municipal Reference Library, Room 1105, City Hall at \$1.00 post-paid.

Traveling Exhibit of Brazilian Architecture

The "Brazil Builds" exhibition, held at New York's Museum of Modern Art early this year, is now on tour among American universities and museums. The exhibit features pictures of the best modern architecture in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and other cities and views of fine old buildings of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. The contrast is striking. Philip Goodwin has written an illustrated book called "Brazil Builds" which was published in January by the Museum of Modern Art. Early in 1944 the exhibition will reach Chicago where it will be shown in the Art Institute.

Transparent celluloid sheets are being successfully used instead of glass in storm windows in cold regions. It is claimed that the plastic has a lower heat conductivity than glass and transmits and traps more radiant heat from the sun. Also it does not break easily from explosion concussions.

Chicago's Newest Housing Project

Chicago Housing Authority announces completion of the Robert H. Brooks' homes, Chicago's largest war housing project. It contains 834 family units. It is for Negro war workers. Eventually 3,500 persons will be housed there. The homes are bounded by Roosevelt Road, Racine Avenue, Loomis and 14th Streets on the near west side.

The structures are a combination of one and two story apartments built in 90 modern two story row house buildings. Buildings are of fireproof construction. Apartments range from 2½ to 6½ rooms. The units have double exposure with windows in every room.

Rents range from \$20 to \$38 per month including heat, gas and electricity. The architects are Associated Housing Architects, Inc., \$4,700,000 covers the cost of land and buildings.

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certing to Beauty herself, who is sincerely conscious of her ability to function quite as well as Ugliness.

"What is the world coming to?" she says to herself. "Are there to be no more birds of bright plumage, no more aigrettes, no more of the subtle devices of appeal to which Nature herself resorts for the perpetuation of life, the exercise of liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? Where are all the architects," she cries, "who used to fall for me? Where are the poets who used to make ballads to my eyebrow, the minstrels whom I inspired to sweet song, the painters who delighted in loveliness?" She waits for an answer. They are gone—all gone—or at least they are in hiding. Others are goose-stepping to the sharp commands of the apostles of the new order. They have taken over the universities and the academies; they are burning the books. "No more dalliance," they bark. "Eyes forward. Don't look back. Let the dead past bury its dead."

We begin to feel the hot breath of the superman. "This is the Age of Power," he cries. "So be your age. Make all your buildings look like Powerhouses." And we begin to see universities that look like great industrial plants, museums and schools and hospitals that look like factories, houses that look like littler factories or laboratories or quarantine stations. Machines for living! Yes. But living to what end!

Let us never forget that men cannot nourish themselves forever on the dry husks of scientific efficiency, under the tyranny of cold mathematical calculation, bent before an altar of barren ideologies. Let us contend, as men once contended, for the solace of art, for the spiritual comfort of the old—yes, the old-fashioned—humanities, for the thrill of melody, for the peace that comes with beauty.

Only recently one of the most active proponents of the Modern cult raised his voice to plead for more art in housing. So you see the pangs of hunger have already begun to gnaw. They must be satisfied in time, for we shall have more art in housing, more sap, more juice, more blood and sweat and tears, and, please God, more laughter. We shall have, indeed, a new architecture, different from the old as the old styles are different from each other but, like the old, rich with all the poetry of man's experience and the promise of his possibilities.

We believe architecture to be an essential service to human society, if by architecture we mean such fabrics as satisfy the hunger of the soul, not merely the hunger of the belly or the bank account or the lust for power. We believe it the architect's responsibility to keep faith with himself, for only thus will his fellow men keep their faith in themselves or their faith in architecture.

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French Craftsmen in Early Illinois

Historical restorations, in addition to recreating past scenes and structures, invariably focus our attention to the skill, ingenuity and resourcefulness of the early craftsmen. One is apt to assume that their work would be crude because they worked in virgin country far from their homelands. Such was not the case. Lack of processed materials seemed to make but little difference, especially with the French in early Illinois. Some of their work which has been preserved for us, or retrieved from excavations, was cleverly designed and beautifully executed. Their superb skill and adaptability is forcefully illustrated by the restoration of the furnishings for the Chapel at Fort de Chartres, the research for which we have just completed.

We find that there were three general classifications of craftsmen: military, civil and those who were especially trained for church work. It seems that good military and civil craftsmen were not prevalent prior to 1752. McCarty, the French Military Commandant of the "Illinois country," was concerned about the available labor necessary to construct the new stone fort. On January 15, 1752, he wrote Vaudreuil, his superior in New Orleans: "It would also be well, Messieurs, to send master masons and soldiers who are workmen, as there are six good or bad among the troop and inhabitants; and the only good carpenter we have is the soldier Nantias, who is sick and a drunkard." His plea for better and skilled workmen was answered later in the year when several hundred soldier craftsmen arrived to begin construction of the new stone fort, which was the third fort in this community bearing the name Fort de Chartres.

These master masons, carpenters, lime burners, lead miners, quarrymen, teamsters, boat builders, and blacksmiths arrived with their tools and some iron bars and beyond that they had naught but their skill and the natural materials of the surrounding country.

From these combined resources they built the strongest French fort in America west of Fort Niagara. Their greatest problem was to provide their own materials. They felled oak and walnut trees and after seasoning, fashioned their beams, girders and millwork. Most of the workers or their descendants came from Normandy and Brittany and were imbued with ship building traditions. The stone was quarried, cut and the random ashlar walls were laid with mortar made with lime of their own burning. The wall surfaces were "smothered" with mortar and the interiors whitewashed. Lead was quarried in the Missouri Ozarks to the west. Iron for hardware, bolts, nails and pintles was imported from Quebec and France.

After the completion of the Fort, many of the workers left the service for civil construction, joining the guilds or labor unions of the day. French craftsmen in Quebec and Montreal belonged to these guilds or "confreries" very similar to those in France and other parts of Europe. Our research for the restoration of the Chapel at Fort Chartres, discloses that without a doubt this same guild system prevailed in our own "Illinois country" during the French regime ending in 1765. The guild craftsmen were of three groups or grades; masters, companions and the apprentices. The apprentice was required to make his own tools and learn his trade under the watchful eye of his master. This group of craftsmen was responsible for the homes and other construction of the period (excepting public buildings and fortifications) and we run across many interesting and amusing contracts.

The interiors of the homes in Normandy, Brittany, Quebec and early Illinois were severe and austere, but the churches were more elaborate and the furnishings, especially the altar, reredos (in Quebec churches this feature was known as the retable), communion rail, and altar furnishings, were highly embellished, enameled and gilded. Craftsmen were given special training in church work. As early as 1668 we find references to two schools in Quebec for those "destined for the church." One was connected with the Seminary at Quebec and the other, partially devoted to agriculture, was at St. Joachim, a village about thirty miles below Quebec on the St. Lawrence. In both schools instruction was given in architecture, painting, sculpture, and gilding. According to Prof. Ramsay Traquair (not retired) of McGill University, Montreal: "They left behind a school of Canadian artists with definite traditions of sculpture, wood carving and decoration." They were trained in the works

of Vignola and his theories of proportions and with the publications of Blondel.

Marius Barbeau of the National Museum at Ottawa, an authority on early French churches, advised us that he believes the craftsmen who designed and built the church furnishings at Fort de Chartres were Quebec carvers, working in the current style of the period which was a Canadian development of Louis XIV motives. Usually the altars and retable ornaments were made and carved in the church in which they were to be placed, or in the immediate neighborhood. Our research disclosed that the Jesuit "establishment" at Kaskaskia comprised their church, college, apartments, shops, storehouses, specially trained workers, and negro slaves. We believe that the furnishings for the Fort Chartres Chapel were designed and made in these Jesuit shops in Kaskaskia.

The "architecte" was consulted in Canada during this period as a structural expert and was considered necessary on public buildings and fortifications. Jean Baptiste Saucier, French Military engineer (and by definition an "Architecte") designed and supervised the construction of the third Fort de Chartres. Apparently he prepared the plans in Illinois and sent them to the War Department in Paris for approval. Copies of these plans were not on file in the Paris archives although those of Fort Niagara, built about the same time, were found. Original examples of early French craftsmanship are still standing in St. Genevieve, Mo., and reproductions of their works are the restoration of Fort de Chartres and the Cahokia Court House, recently completed by the State of Illinois.

—Joseph F. Booton, Chief of Design

Division of Architecture and Engineering, State of Illinois

Based upon some thirty years of experience and observation of buildings in greater New York City, Reginald Bolton (*Building for Profit*) gives the following data for the economic life of various types of buildings: Hotels—15-18 years; Apartment houses—18-21 years; Store buildings—21-25 years; Office and business buildings—27-33 years; Lofts and factories—33-37 years; Residences—37-44 years; Banks and institutions—44-50 years.

A Washington scout reports the Pentagon building is called the WAAC's-works.

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enthusiastically for Dr. Thornton's design which was carried out. Washington's public buildings, except perhaps for some of the most recent, all follow Classic or Renaissance models. In the interest of harmony, it would appear wise that the architects, John Russell Pope Associates (Otto R. Eggers and Daniel Paul Higgins) followed the general conception laid down by the founders of Washington.

John D. Chubb, prolific Midwest school architect with office, through the years, in Chicago, died in his home in Chicago on May 8, age 74. Mr. Chubb was born in Plymouth, England. His identification with Chicago began in 1898. From 1898 through 1940 he built schools, recreation buildings and other accessory structures in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois. It appears none of his work was planned for the city of Chicago.

A tabulation of all his work from 1898 through 1940, work that he designed and supervised, shows a building cost of \$15,600,000. He was architect for the vocational school at Battle Creek, Mich., senior high vocational at Two Rivers, Wis., senior high school at Kenosha, Wis., Maine Township high school at Cook County, Ill., senior high and vocational school at Quincy, Ill., Lincolnwood school at Skokie, Ill., the Zion-Benton Townships high school at Zion, Wis., among the many others. He was a very hard worker, devoting himself constantly to his profession. He was a member of the Illinois Society of Architects since September 18, 1915.

G. Broes Van Dort, architectural book dealer known to Chicago architects through many years, died at his home in Chicago, April 25, age 80. Mr. Van Dort was born in Holland and came to Chicago to see the Columbian Exposition in 1893. After a short return to Holland, he came back to Chicago permanently.